

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, November 23. 1695.

Quest. 1. **Y**OU have ajlerted in your Mercury of April 30th, that the blackness of the Negroes was only the effect of the Climate, and that in two or three Generations, Europeans by transplantation into the torrid Zone will attain to the same Tincture, all which is a mistake to my own certain Knowledge; I desire you therefore to prove that there are any natural Blacks, in any part of the world except in Africa, or such as have had their original from thence: Examin all parts of Asia and America, both Islands and Continents throughout the Torrid Zone, and even under the Line, and you'll find the Inhabitants only Tawny, and tho all the Caribbe Islands, as also Iamai-
ca, Hispaniola, and all the Torrid Zone of the Continent, viz. of New Spain and Brazzel, have been above an hundred years Inhabited by Europeans, yet hath not that Alteration or change of Climate wrought upon those Inhabitants any such effects; and if accidentally some small change be in such persons as are daily exposed to the Sun, as we see in our own Climate, yet shall not that be conveyed to their Children. For which reasons I rather incline to the opinion of Dr. Heylin, who ascribes the Blackness of the Negroes to the curse upon the posterity of Cham. Pray your second thoughts on this matter?

Answe. The cause of the Negroes Blackness has been always accounted a great secret in nature, which the wisest can but guess at, and it may be, after all, Ovids account on't is as near the matter as any we have had since, who gravely tells us, that when Pbaeton fired the world.

*Sanguine hinc credunt in Corpora Summa vocato,
Æthiopium populos nigrum traxisse colorem.*

Which take thus, in Mr. Sandy's English.

*Men say the Ethiopians then grew smart,
Their blood exhaled to the outward part.*

Which, in their Mythologic Physiologie, seems to imply no more than the commonly received opinion, that the Ethiopians got their blackness by being the Sun's too near Neighbours. In which if we were mistaken, we are glad to be set right; tho this we are as certain of as the querist can be of the other side, that his way of solution will not hold: For tho 'tis a pretty notion that the Blacks were the posterity of Cham, and carry the mark of his sin in their Countenances, and tho that fancy might have a little help from another, that the name of Cham, whence the Libyan Ammon, signifies Heat,

which is only translated by the Greek, *Zeus*, exactly of the same signification, yet all this is knockt and many other probabilities are quite overturn'd by this Demonstration; a considerable part of *Asia* was peopled by the posterity of *Cham*, who yet are only Tawny, not black, and that even those of his undoubted posterity in *Africa* it self, are of no other colour. The Sons of *Cham*, says *Josephus*, posseſſ'd all *Syria*, and the Regions near mount *Libanus*, and *Amanus*. *Canaan's* Eleven Sons were placed in or near *Palestine*, with whom, had they been Blacks, we can hardly believe the *Jews* wou'd so easily and so commonly have intermarry'd. However, the *Carthaginians* were undoubtedly a Colony of their *Phœnicians*, nor are the *Moors* at present, much more Tawny than their Neighbours on the other side, the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*, there being but a little gut running between 'em.

Quest. 2. *What reason can you give why the Eastern winds shou'd be so much colder and sharper then the Western, seeing both are parallel from the Sun and the Aequinox?*

Answe. A probable reason to be assign'd for this difference, we think, may be taken from the places from whence these winds come, or which they visit in their passage. The *Eastern* is more a *Land Wind*, and comes over vast tracts of Ground, many of 'em cold enough, before it reaches our *Climate*. The *Western* comes from the *Sea*, which is considerably warmer than the *Land*, where mixing with the vapours, which are accounted the cause of the warmth of *Islands*, it may come less sensibly cold than that which arrives from the contrary quarter.

Quest. 3 *If the Earth and Water make but one Globe, by what is it binder'd from falling into the Abyss?*

Answe. By the same power that keeps the *Sun* and *Stars* from falling down upon the *Earth*; Which can be no less than that which made 'em all.

Quest. 4. *Pray, are there not many scores of Country Parishes in England, who are most sadly and miserably supply'd with Ministers and Teachers. O how many drunken, wicked, idle, and naughty men are amongst 'em? How many vain persons whose own Lives are patterns of wickedness, never minding their own Souls nor the conversion of others, so they do but preach, such as it is, and have for it perhaps 3 or 4 Score pounds a year, and some a great deal more, it's all they mind or care for. I desire your serious thoughts on this question, and whether this be not the reason why we have so much wickedness, Atheism,*

ism, and Infidelity amongst us. Pray your thoughts also about some healing Plaster for this deadly wound.

Answ. If you live in the City, 'tis not probable that you know one score of Country Parishes, especially so well as to judge of the morals of all their Ministers: If not, how wicked and uncharitable is this censure of yours, that there are scores, nay many scores of Parishes who are sadly and miserably supply'd with drunken, idle, and wicked *Incumbents*? We can't deny that some of the Clergy may be involv'd in that general Corruption of the manners that over-spreads the Nation; and were there but one such, 'twou'd be too many, and the bad example of one of them must do more mischief, as well as make more noise, than any others, and if they are not better than others, they must needs be worse, and woe unto them by whom such offences come, tho 'tis impossible but they must come. Nor is it strange that among so considerable a body of men, there shou'd be found who extremely disgrace their Character, and are highly unworthy of it. Tho 'tis notorious that all the care is now taken that can be, it may be more than at any other time since the Reformation, that the Clergy shall lead such lives as they are oblig'd to do by solemn vow and promise, and 'tis known that those who do no are not so soon preferred, as, perhaps, they might have been in former Reigns. And notwithstanding some Exceptions, none, we think, but those who are extreamly Prejudic'd, will deny that the Clergy of *England* are at this time as considerable a Body, both for *Piety* and *Learning*, Good Preaching and good Living, as any in the world, or, Perhaps, as any that have liv'd here in any Age of the Church since the Apostles.

We wou'd not lie for Gods sake, nor do evil that good may come on't; but on a fair and just consideration of all those Country Parishes wherewith we are acquainted, having call'd to mind as many as we can think on, and that in a part of *England*, which we have reason to believe is not the best provided, we cannot in Fifty or Threescore Parishes, think of above three or four (tho those too many) who disgrace their Character in the Instances which the querist mention'd; so far from it, that the Pulpits are fill'd with sober and ingenious Men, good Preachers and good Livers, tho neither that height of Learning, nor quickness of Conversation is to be expected from all them, that's to be found in such as have the advantages for attaining 'em which they want. Notwithstanding all which, it can't be deny'd but they have more than enough of Enemies, which the Clergy wou'd be sure to have, shou'd they all Preach and live like

Angels. Some don't love 'em, because they are tainted with an opposite Leaven, and hold such *Principles* as are contrary to those of the Clergy, both in *Church* and *State*. Others out of Covetousness, or Envy, or meanness of Spirit, thinking they are too well provided for, if they have so profuse a maintenance as 3 or 4 score pounds a year, which will scarce clear Fifty, as Taxes now are, reckoning repairs, and other charges, tho in the 50 Parishes which we before reckon'd, there are not ten which have so much as the least of those summs, yearly income. Now that the ill Lives of the Clergy in general, is not any proper cause of the increase of Infidelity and Lewdness among us, is certain, because, when taken in gross, 'tis a *false imputation*, we having heard some Deists themselves confess [that the Clergy are by much the most *Moral* part of the *Nation*] and we have still another argument for't. That Atheism and Infidelity, we think we may add *Lewdness* too, are not near so common in the *Country* as they are in this *City*, and yet we suppose neither the *Abilities* nor the *Morals* of the City Clergy can with any pretence of truth be blam'd for't. And where there is some *Scandalous Clerk* in a little corner in the *Country*, you shall for the most part find he came in after a *scandalous manner*, by some *unrighteous Contract* or the like, which we have reason to believe is the general, and almost constant method of all *Pepish Parsons*, who laugh at the *Laws*, and present still whom they please as freely as ever: One of 'em we cou'd name, who being prest to present a pious and ingenious person, immediately swore that he wou'd not give him the Living for that very reason, because he had so good a Character. We shall conclude with an observation some years since made, by a person who was no very great Friend to the Clergy, who yet frankly own'd, that the disrespect which they too commonly suffer'd, was an effect (we may add a cause too) of the general *Debauchery* and *Infidelity* among us.

Advertisements.

If any Minister's *Widow*, or other persons have any Library, or parcel of books to dispose of, if they will send a Catalogue of them, or notice where they are, to *John Dunton*, at the *Raven* in *Jewen-street*, they shall have ready mony for them, to the full of what they are worth.

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